



DHS Matters!

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Submit stories by e-mail to DHS-Newsletter@michigan.gov

Hurricane Katrina relief: an emerging mission for DHS offices around Michigan

Responding to Gov. Granholm's request to assist as many as 10,000 relocated victims of Hurricane Katrina, DHS employees around Michigan worked together to directly serve evacuees and donate funds and goodwill to persons from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast.

In response to the devastating destruction of Hurricane Katrina, staff members from the dual **Cheboygan-Mackinac County DHS**, all pulled together to donate to the Red Cross Hurricane Katrina Relief Fund. Thanks to adult protective services specialist **Vince Tricoci** the offices were able to raise \$540 towards the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

— from **Gretchen Lees**

In Gratiot-Clinton DHS...here are a couple of pictures (below) from Saturday, Sept. 1 of the progress taking donations of



clothing and water for the hurricane victims in the South. We loaded up all the boxes of clothes in the trailer, and now we have just as much stuff - big bags of clothes and other stuff - still in the entry way.



Local pastor of Ithaca Baptist Church (and foster-adoptive dad) Robb Ryerse started the process of relief requests. Aided by foster adoptive recruiter, **Donna Husted Kriss**, we notified local news media and made many calls and flyers to request food, water, batteries and stuffed toys. The Ryerse family was traveling to northern Arkansas and made contact with the local Salvation Army shelter there to accept the donations.

Gratiot County children's services worker **Michael Minarik** contributed greatly to the cause by using his 10 X 6 foot trailer behind a 15-passenger van donated for this use by Trinity Baptist church.

On Monday, Sept. 5 Robb Ryerse delivered the packed 15 passenger van and trailer in Arkansas when it was really needed. They arrived at the correct destination and connected with a Salvation Army truck as it was being loaded. Some people were bringing individual bags of donations; they pulled up and...**WHAM!**...they were able to fill the back of the semi truck!

The relief workers kept asking, "You are from *where!*?" They donations were immediately shipped to the destination about 45 minutes away where 10,000 victims from the hurricane were at, so they were able to bring immediate comfort to survivors, and to the ones in need.

— from **Donna Husted Kriss**

In Calhoun County...The Department of Human Services has always been known to be there in time of need for the people we serve. Calhoun County is no exception to this rule. Director **Gwain McCree** and his staff have stepped up like never before to serve the victims of hurricane Katrina as soon as they landed at W.K. Kellogg Regional Airport on Sept. 5. Even though this was a holiday Gwain and crew began making calls to staff and

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DHS offices around Michigan set up emergency operations to help more than 2,000 evacuees coming to the Great Lake State from New Orleans and the Gulf Coast. Here, employees at the **Genesee County Welcoming Evacuees Community Action Relief Center (or WE CARE)** in Flint - a collaboration of the county DHS, intermediate school district, police, emergency services and health department -- have helped 70 families through Sept. 20.

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agencies so that by Tuesday morning they were ready to put their support into motion. Not only were they on the front line for the evacuees, all the staff pitched in the best way that they could. The week was declared a casual week for the cause and we collected more than \$1,207. The funds were donated to the Red Cross and designated for transportation which we had seen first hand a primary need for many of the evacuees trying to connect with loved ones. What a rewarding week for all of us.

– from **Jon Olson**

Muskegon County helps New Orleans Mission, issues challenge to other counties

From Lori Purnell, Information Technology Technician

Muskegon County DHS, Muskegon

PurnellL@michigan.gov

During the week of Sept. 12-16, Muskegon County DHS employees dressed casual for the entire week. To participate in this we asked for monetary donations, with no set amount. We were inspired to meet or beat Kent County's donation reported in the Sept. 16 issue of "FYI In The Morning" and we raised \$1,300.

We researched charitable organizations in the affected area of hurricane's path and decided on the New Orleans Mission. I wrote to Rebecca Bourque, the assistant director of the mission, asking her about the condition of their building, if they are able to continue helping those they serve, and which type of donation would be best for them at this time. Ron Gonzales, executive director of the New Orleans Mission, replied to my email for information.

"Our building is functional, but will need some clean up and repair. Our intention is to have our volunteers in the facility within 3-4 weeks preparing it for the services we will be offering to returning evacuees. We will be providing transitional services including, but not limited to, meals, shelter, transportation, medical assistance, education for school-age children, counseling, and distribution of supplies and necessities. Most of our work will be accomplished using volunteers from around the nation who have been signing up for specific tasks and periods of time. We will be housing them in our women's center, while providing services for the community out of our main facility.

"A monetary donation would be most helpful. We are receiving many gift-in-kind donations but there are many things we will need that we are going to have to purchase (gasoline, medicine, building supplies, specific food items, etc.). We would very much appreciate your support. The New Orleans Mission has been providing services for the homeless since 1989 and is one of the largest service providers for the homeless in New Orleans. We are the only mission that provides all services for free. Long after the big boys have gone home, the staff and volunteers of the New Orleans Mission will still be providing for the needs of the homeless and poor within the city of New Orleans.

"This is not a passing task for us, it is what we do and will continue to do for as long as we are able. We make no distinction between race, religion, age or sex. We serve anyone and everyone who walks through our doors, providing individualized attention for every need that we face. We also have an excellent relationship with the police, the local hospitals, private businesses and churches, and other government organizations with whom we work. The New Orleans Mission serves the people of New Orleans. We would appreciate your support."

You can forward a donation to New Orleans Mission at their temporary address – 2711 Valley View Lane, Suite 103, Dallas, TX 75234, or contact them at 1130 Oretha Castle Haley Blvd., New Orleans, LA 70113 by calling (504) 523-2116 or (800) 488-4205 (cell). Muskegon County DHS employees challenge other offices to meet or beat our donation. For information on charitable organizations see <http://www.networkforgood.org/>



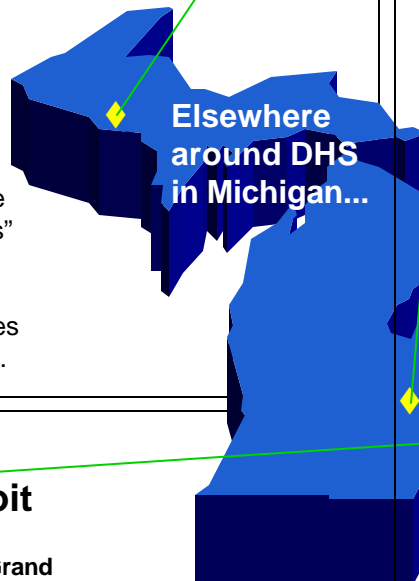
July 4 patriotic gift to Iron County staff

From Byron Lee Koenig
Iron County DHS, Caspian
KoenigB@michigan.gov

The Iron County DHS office recently received a flag from Staff Sergeant Jaime Krym. Jaime is the son of **Carole Harris** who retired as an eligibility specialist in Iron County. SSG Krym, currently stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan, also sent a certificate and letter. The certificate reads in part:

"Kandahar PRT, Task Force Victory. So that all shall know, this flag was flown in the face of the enemy and bears witness to the American endeavor to eradicate terrorist forces threatening the freedom of the United States of America and the world. This flag was flown at Kandahar, Afghanistan on July 4, 2005 in honor of Independence Day, Operation Enduring Freedom."

In Jaime's letter, he thanks the Iron County staff for the donation of phone cards they received before deployment. He also writes of a "Shoes for Kids" program that he and his squad started. As of July, they collected over 350 pairs of shoes to be given to the local children.



Elsewhere
around DHS
in Michigan...

Greydale District & Reality Check Detroit

From Sharon Rowland
Wayne County DHS Greydale-Grand
River District, Detroit
RowlandS@michigan.gov

Reality Check Detroit (RCD) is a community based non-profit organization. It is a crime prevention program designed to assist youth, ages 6 to 14, struggling with everyday life situations. Its focused areas of development are educational, social and behavioral (criminal).

One major collaborator with the RCD program is with the Wayne County DHS Greydale-Grand River District. Greydale assisted the Reality Check Detroit program in raising close to \$200 in July to help toward a fundraiser dinner held on July 29. Not only did the Greydale people donate money but some purchased tickets to the dinner. There are several dedicated workers at the Greydale District that use their free time to volunteer with the Reality Check Detroit program. Way to go Greydale!

Reality Check Detroit has several programs. For more information on the Reality Check Detroit program, go to their Web site at www.realitycheckdetroit.org. If you would like to become a volunteer for the program, please feel free to call Reality Check Detroit at 313-867-3264 or Sharon Rowland at the Greydale District at (313) 387-2923.



Pictured left to right are Iron County DHS staff members **Allison Angeli**, **Byron Koenig**, **Bonnie Sundquist** and **Steven Stutz**.

Sixth foster care picnic held in Flint

From Mary Smith, Protective Services Supervisor
Genesee County DHS, Flint
SmithM33@michigan.gov

The Genesee County Children's District held our sixth annual picnic Aug. 15 at Ballenger Park in Flint. This year's picnic was a huge success and was attended by over 250 foster children, foster parents and children services staff.

The foster care & protective services staffs organizes this event, which is supported by donations by the foster care & CPS staff, child advocacy team, foster care recruitment funds, our county director and community partners who make donations.

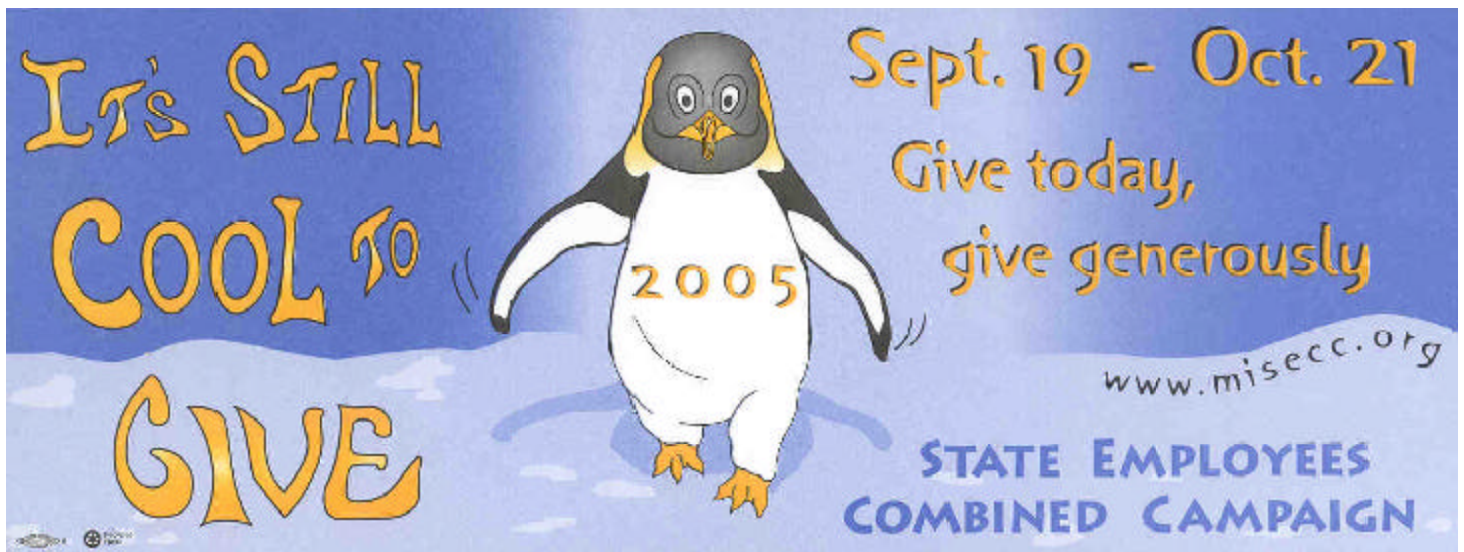
The annual picnic is meant to provide a positive and fun event that allows the children to have fun and just "be a kid." The picnic also allows the foster parents to relax and take a break.

Everyone enjoyed hot dogs, hamburgers, chips, juice, and salads, sno-cones and other desserts.

This year we were able to have a bounce house, obstacle course, balloon launch, face painting & horseback riding. The Flint Fire Department brought the smokehouse for children to learn fire safety. Each child was given a tee shirt designed by one of our foster children.

At this time the picnic committee members would like to thank our county director, **Denise Chambers** and our district manager, **Sheryl Thompson**, for allowing us to have such an event. Thank you for allowing us to restore hope and joy into the lives of the children who turn to us for protection.

We want to thank the following people for volunteering at the picnic; **Damiekco Smith**, **Nichole Ward**, **Jill Griffin**, **Khalilah Majied**, **Goldie Alomar**, **Deondra Dennis**, **Latoya Carroll**, **Terri June**, **Meon Stubbs**, **Elizabeth Montemayor**, **Jamie Baxter**, **Christina Garza**, **Jennifer Hartzel**, **Lisa Thomas**, **Amanda Herrick**, **Michelle Young**, **Michelle Mullen**, **Felicia Beadle** and **Mary Smith**. It would not have been such a success without all of the help of the volunteers.



Date: Aug. 5

To: **Denise Thomas**, Activities Therapy Supervisor
W.J. Maxey Boys Training School, Whitmore Lake

Subj: Thanks

I wanted to thank you for filling out that recommendation form for me for the City Year Program. I was just accepted which means I'll be moving to San Jose in less than a month. I also wanted to thank you for providing me with the chance to do some great work with the boys at Maxey.

My experience there paved the way for me to do a program like City Year. Without such an experience I have no idea what I would be doing now but there's no way it would be as meaningful as City Year.

Getting to work with some of these amazing boys and witnessing how passionate you and many of the other faculty (members) are for your work was truly inspiring. Thought both semesters you were more than accommodating for us, always going the extra yard to get us something that we needed (and more than likely something we requested last minute) because you believe in what we were doing and wanted the best for the boys.

I'll always remember my time at Maxey as one of the experiences that was truly inspirational for me.

Blue Whitelaw

■ *The author was a University of Michigan outreach student working at Maxey. City Year San Jose is a community service entity. Its members serve children in school classrooms and in after school programs, inspire youth to make positive choices, lead volunteers, develop leadership skills, and make life-long friends.*

Date: May 5

To: **Ken Erickson**, Cook (and residents)
Shawono Center, Grayling

Subj: Thanks

Thanks a lot for the cookies, everybody loved them and appreciated the hard work that you guys put in to them. It's really hot here averaging 120 degrees every day. This is a real bad neighborhood; people are dying around here every day. We all just do our jobs and try to stay alive. We had a 10 truck convoy go out of here the day after the cookies arrived.

I gave each truck a tin of them. They were like kids at Christmas. I hope you guys listen to your counselors and Mr., Erickson and do your time and get out of there and make good lives for yourselves. It is possible! Have a good summer.

F.O.B. Caldwell

Iraq

■ *Shawono Center is a DHS juvenile justice facility. The author is a member of Michigan Army National Guard 1071st Maintenance Company from Lansing stationed in Iraq. His group received the cookies as a gift from Shawono residents.*

DHS Matters! is a product of Michigan's Department of Human Services
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